

May 3, 2015

Dear Families,

We had a great week back together again after our week long vacation. I hope you enjoyed time with your kids. My family traveled to San Diego to visit family there and to soak in some sunshine. It was wonderful! It was a treat to come back to our Maine Night rehearsals and concert this week. These kids did a fantastic job and I am so proud of them!



I'm afraid that I am long overdue with a newsletter, so hope the following answers any questions you may have about what we've been up to in 3rd grade. If not, please don't hesitate to send me an email!

Reading

We began book clubs last week and kids loved it! From now until the end of the year, kids will be working in groups of 3 to 5 and will be reading and discussing books together. Last week most instruction focused on learning all about how to be a member of a book club. We learned about setting goals for pages we'd like to read together, what to do when you've read your assigned pages but still have more reading time left (read your back-up book!), how to prepare for your daily book club conversation, and how to actually have a conversation with others about a book. We watched a video clip of other students having an engaging book club conversation and noticed what they did well. We will continue to work on these objectives in the next few weeks, however, reading instruction next week will again focus mainly on characters. We will learn to notice details about main and supporting characters, and follow their development through a story. Many book clubs will be reading across a series, and we'll look at how characters grow and change across a book and also across a series of books.

Writing

Your students have been learning all about how to write a strong persuasive essay during writing time. This unit began with students reading a speech to Mr. Murphy about our need for longer recess times and more equipment. Mr.

Murphy was convinced and allowed students to work with Mrs. Brault to order new items for our recess times! Since, then students have written amazing pieces about many topics, from why kids should be allowed to have their own phones to why and how to save seal lions. Students have been learning to write longer pieces that begin with a thesis statement and are organized into several paragraphs. They've really been doing a fantastic job! Soon we will pick our strongest piece and I hope to take video of kids reading their persuasive speeches to one another.

Math

As you know, our current math unit focuses on multiplication and division strategies. We have learned the "Partial Products" and "Lattice" methods for multiplication of larger numbers. This week we'll explore "Partial Products" with two 2-digit numbers. As always, I appreciate you supporting the methods I am teaching kids as you do homework at home. Remember that you can log on to the Everyday Math website to watch animations of these algorithms. There is also a slide show called "Algorithms Step by Step" on our classroom website that may be helpful to you. We are doing pretty well with our basic multiplication facts—we just passed our $\times 7$ test as a class and will be focusing on $\times 8$ next week! I will be giving students more mixed multiplication review, so keep practicing those facts! Thanks for all your support with this at home!

MEA/Smarter Balanced Testing

We have been spending time each week preparing for the MEA/Smarter Balanced test. We are scheduled to take this test during the week of May 18 in the afternoon. Please try not to schedule your students for any appointments during the afternoons of that week, as we will be spending the entire afternoon testing each day that week. The best way for you to prepare your child is to make sure that he/she is well rested and has a good breakfast/snack/lunch each day of testing. Please let me know if you have any questions!